

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6337

As of January 29, 2010

Title: An act relating to inmate savings accounts.

Brief Description: Concerning inmate savings accounts.

Sponsors: Senators Regala, Carrell, Hargrove and Brandland.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/28/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Shani Bauer (786-7468)

Background: When an inmate receives funds while incarcerated, with limited exception, those funds are subject to a 10 percent deduction to be placed in the inmate's personal inmate savings account. Funds in the account, together with any accrued interest, are only available to the inmate:

1. at the time of the inmate's release from confinement;
2. prior to the inmate's release from confinement in order to secure approved housing; or
3. when the Secretary determines that an emergency exists for the inmate.

Except for at the time of release when the inmate is entitled to all the funds in his or her account, the secretary must determine the amount of funds to be made available to the inmate.

Summary of Bill: Funds in a personal inmate savings account may be made available to an inmate to pay for department-approved postsecondary educational expenses. The Secretary must establish guidelines for the release of funds from an account giving consideration to the inmate's need for resources at the time of his or her release from confinement.

Obsolete language requiring the Department of Corrections (DOC) to expand correctional industries and report by stated deadlines is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a good bill, but it might make sense to broaden the language to allow a person to access funds for other things such as treatment or union dues so an offender can get their tools back on day one. The request for this bill was the result of an offender who was prohibited from using funds in his account to pay for correspondence courses from an accredited university. The offender should be allowed to pay for the education course if the school is accredited, without the need for approval by the Secretary.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Eldon Vail, Secretary, DOC; Ari Kohn, Post-Prison Education Program.